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Finally, Mr. Spencer makes the following important admission:—

“This general conclusion brings with it the thought that the phrases employed in discussing organic evolution, though convenient and indeed needful, are liable to mislead us by veiling the actual agencies. That which really goes on in every organism is the working together of component parts in ways conducing to the continuance of their combined actions in presence of things and actions outside, some of which tend to subserve and others to destroy the combination. The matters and forces in these two groups are the sole causes properly so called. The words ‘natural selection’ do not express a cause in the physical sense. They express a mode of co-operation among causes, or rather, to speak strictly, they express an effect of this mode of co-operation” (p. 40).

Here we have frankly intimated what the Neolamarckian has for years insisted on, that the phrase “natural selection” is not a *vera causa*, but rather expresses the results or effects of the co-operation of a number of factors in organic evolution. In the case of too many naturalists the dogma or creed of natural selection has, it seems to us, tied their hands, obscured their vision, and prevented their seeking by observation and experiment to discover, so far as human intelligence can do so, the tangible, genuine, efficient factors of organic evolution.

EDITORS' TABLE.

EDITORS: E. D. COPE AND J. S. KINGSLEY.

The bringing into cultivation of the arid regions of the United States would increase the agricultural resources of the nation by one-third. The man who should devise a successful method of doing this would be one of the benefactors of his kind and country. The region to be thus reclaimed includes a wide strip extending north and south, east of the Rocky Mountains; a large part of the drainage basin of the Rio Grande; the hydrographic basin of the Great Colorado, and the Great Basin of Utah and Nevada. Small portions of all these regions are at present

rendered productive by irrigation, and give an earnest of the great possibilities which await the entire region. The productiveness of the Great Basin of Utah and Nevada would be equal to that of the most favored of temperate regions of the earth were water only accessible, as the results of irrigation by the Mormons and others have demonstrated.

The attempt to supply the lack of water by artesian wells has proven successful only in limited localities, and it has been long evident that some other source of supply must be looked for. Major J. W. Powell having given the subject his attention for many years, has at leached a solution as nearly adequate as the circumstances permit. He has proposed to Congress that the U. S. Government dam up the waters of the streams and rivers which issue from the various Rocky Mountain ranges, and thus accumulate their waters for a wholesale system of irrigation.

There appears to be nothing impracticable about this proposition. The manner in which the rivers issue from the Rocky Mountains in narrow canyons seems to be well adapted for the execution of such an enterprise. The artificial closing of the canyons of the Platte and Arkansas on the east, of the Rio Grande on the south, and of the Green and Gunnison on the west, would seem to present no great engineering difficulties, and immense bodies of water would be thus secured for purposes of irrigation. The benefits to agriculture resulting would be immense, and regions now almost useless to mankind, would become well populated. Some large regions would, however, not be reached by this system, especially a great part of the Great Basin.

Congress has appropriated \$100,000 towards this important project, to be expended under the direction of Major Powell. We observe with pleasure that Major Powell regards this enterprise as entirely distinct from the U. S. Geological Survey. We hope he will continue to resist the attempt of some members of the lower House to saddle the expense of this undertaking on the Geological Survey; otherwise we will have another and gigantic illustration of a purely scientific enterprise swamped by the utilitarianism which is so rampant and all-absorbing in this country.